

Monthly Publication
Number 361

March
2005

Columbia -

Willamette

— FACETS —

Faceter's

Guild



"MORE FACETING DESIGNS EACH MONTH"

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COLUMBIA-WILLAMETTE FACETER'S GUILD

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Guild Meetings: First Tuesday of each Month

Meeting Place: OMSI, 1945 SE Water Avenue

March's meeting is at 7:30 p.m. at OMSI.

Program:

Spinel Lore by Sylvia La Croix

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**THE BOARD MEETINGS – 4TH
THURSDAY EACH MONTH AT 7:30 pm
LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED**

Visitors Welcome

Member's dues: \$25.00 per year

Membership includes subscription to "FACETS"

Rates are in \$ US or equivalent.

Corresponding Membership, Overseas, and Canada rates
are \$25.00 per year (12 issues).

Checks and Money Orders should be payable to:

Columbia-Willamette Faceter's Guild

P.O. Box 2136, Portland, Oregon 97208-2136

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Candidates for local membership must be approved by the Board of Directors. The Board of directors acts on membership applications at their regular meeting. Candidates must attend at least two regular meetings of the guild before submitting an application. At least one finished faceted stone, done by the candidate, must be submitted with the application.

Candidates for CORRESPONDENT MEMBERSHIP who, by virtue of distance residence or other circumstances that prevent attendance at regular meetings, may waive the attendance requirements. Correspondent members shall be entitled to all the privileges of membership except the right to vote or hold office.

President's Perspective

By Jeff Meinecke

First let me apologize for missing last months meeting. I do not have a good excuse, but I started cutting a piece of sapphire on my faceting machine and the next thing I knew it was 9:30 p.m. I want to thank Glenn for taking my place and keeping everything running smoothly. I heard that Michael Field's presentation was excellent and I really feel bad about missing that.

I hope everyone that went to the Tucson Gem show had a safe and wonderful trip. I look forward to hearing all about the show. I'm hoping that there will be some new quality rough for the guild to cut from Tucson. I want to remind everyone to get some rough from Gail and Heather to cut for the Auction.

I want to encourage everyone who create gem designs to continue to send Jerry designs to print in Facets. I really enjoy cutting them. We have two more classes at the Rice Museum this spring so let everyone you know who might be interested so they can sign up for a class.

I will be at the next meeting and am looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Jeff

From the Editor –

I want to thank everyone for the continued support for Facets. It makes my job a lot easier knowing that I have lots of people behind me helping to make this a better publication.

Several members have asked for a member contact list. Many members would like to be on this list, but I'm sure that some would prefer not to be. At the next and future meetings, I will try to circulate a clipboard that you can put your name, phone number and/or email address on for publication. I will also put a column in so you can indicate if you are willing to take calls to answer questions for other guild faceters. Copies will be made available at the monthly meetings. If you are a corresponding member and want to be on the list or want a copy of the list, just write me at the CWFG address, call me or email me. I'll make sure you get the list.

Dick Walker and Don Olsen provided this month's faceting designs as part of a CWFG Design Group project. A short discussion of these designs follows.

Jerry Bartlemay, Editor

New Drawing to Promote Facets Articles

At the February CWFG board meeting, a new drawing was proposed and approved. Every six months, a drawing will be held to award a piece of gemstone rough to the author of an article published in the last six months.

If you have been thinking about writing an article, now is the time to get it done. If you aren't comfortable doing it or worry that your writing skills aren't good enough, let me help you be a successful author. That's my job as editor.

If you want to write an article and need a subject to write about just let me know. We have a list of requested article topics. Of course, you can choose your own topic on anything related to faceting gemstones.

Jerry Bartlemay, Editor

Dopping Tips: Clean-up of Messy Epoxy Tubes and mixing surfaces.

By Glenn Ruminson

I got tired of getting my fingers gummed up from leaking epoxy and hardener tubes. I avoid the mess by slipping a 2" x 3" polyethylene bag over the bottom end of the tube - all the mess stays inside the bag.

This is probably not new to a lot of you, but I also discovered that ethyl alcohol (sold as denatured alcohol or shellac thinner – editor) will dissolve epoxy, hardener, and mixed but still soft epoxy-hardener. A squirt of alcohol plus scrubbing with a paper towel makes quick and easy cleaning of sticky fingers, or your mixing surface, as long as you do this before the epoxy hardens.

Cut a paper towel into 2" x 2" sections for ease of use in cleaning up epoxy messes. I also find these sections useful in blotting water and debris off stones before checking my cutting progress.

Schedule of Monthly Programs

Mar. 1 - Spinel Lore. By Sylvia La Croix. Spinel is a lesser-understood gemstone with a lot of class. Sylvia's lecture will also cover some other gemstones.

Apr. 5 - Cutting Gemstones for Fun and Profit. Three years ago Daniel Stair started selling gemstones on the Web, taking the big step into self-employment. His lecture will include how to buy rough at the right price, what cuts to use, how to price stones to sell, how to present the stones on the Internet for customer response, and other ideas he has used to build his Internet business on customgemstones.com.

May 3 – Sunstone Success Stories. Terry Clark will entertain us with stories from the Dust Devil Mines.

Letter to the Editor

Hi, Jerry,

I'm finally getting around to writing about the Feb issue...

Thanks for the kudos on page 3 - I love to send designs, and will continue to submit them as long as you find use for them. Hope to have more within a few months, as time permits.

Regarding receiving FACETS via e-mail, I would be amenable to that in PDF format. It would be compact and searchable - Great advantages over my dog-eared paper issues!!

In fact, I would be very grateful if back issues were available in this format - would even donate some \$\$ if I could acquire back issues in this format!

I suggest that this would be a possible source of revenue.

Once again, I'd like to inquire about the "12 best" issue - Is that going to be a dead horse, or are we going to see it again?

Thanks so much for my very favorite monthly reading material!

John Bailey

John,

Please keep the designs and commentary coming, it's much appreciated.

We'll take up the idea of back issues. I don't think it's an enormous task to do this. Hopefully you'll see something on it in Facets soon.

The last issue of Facets didn't include the notice about the "12 Best for 2005", but yes, we have picked this up again. All member-submitted designs will be voted on at the end of the year for inclusion in this list.

Jerry Bartlemay, Editor

This Month's Designs

This month we have two designs each from Don Olsen and Dick Walker. Dick's comments on the pentagonal designs follow.

Pentagon 96 & 80

These two cuts are the product of a CWFG Design group study of the five-sided cut. The 96 is from Don Olsen who undertook to produce a five sided cut with an index gear that is indivisible by 5. Although he accomplished his goal the challenge is that the internal reflections in the stone no longer follow the pentagonal symmetry and can not produce the brilliance that can be achieved with the 80 tooth index. I undertook to recut the design using the 80 tooth index in Gemcad, hence the "Pentagon 80". For those of you who possess both of these index gears it would be a challenge to cut both versions and see if you can see the difference.

Dick Walker

Don Olsen's Fireworks design is corrected from an earlier version.

A Trip to Myanmar

By Jerry Bartlemay

A review of a program given to the CWFG at the February general meeting by Michael A. Field, enhanced by further conversation with the author and research in the CIA World Factbook.

About a year and a half ago, Michael Field took a week-long trip to Myanmar (also known as Burma). He returned to give us a fascinating look at Myanmar from the geographical, cultural, political and gemological perspectives.

Myanmar is a country slightly smaller than Texas located on the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea in Southern Asia. India and Bangladesh border it to the west, China to the northeast, Laos to the east and Thailand to the southeast. With the Bay of Bengal to the west, the Andaman Sea to the south and the Himalayas

to the north, Myanmar is a geographically diverse country. Large areas are sea level lowlands, the central area of the country consists of plains and ringed by high rugged mountains to the north and east. The climate tends to be very hot (consistently over 100 degrees), with a long monsoon season.

This diversity is reflected in the many different gem areas within Myanmar and the 137 different ethnic groups within the Burmese population. The geography of Myanmar creates an isolating factor that keeps these ethnic groups separated. As a result, there are many different dialects and languages spoken within Myanmar. This separation between ethnic groups also keeps them from uniting to help gain representation in government and to resist the military junta currently in place.

The British conquered Burma in 1824, ruling it as a part of its Indian Empire until 1886. It was then administered as a province of India. In 1937 Burma became a separate colony. Independence from the British Commonwealth came in 1948. Currently a balance of a military junta, the government and the Buddhist religion rules Myanmar.

In 1962 the political domination of General Ne Win began, which lasted until 1988. In 1990, multiparty elections occurred where the opposition party National League for Democracy (NLD) won by a landslide. The ruling military junta, however, refused to relinquish power. At various times, the leader of the NLD, Aung San Suu Kyi, has been imprisoned or placed under house arrest. She is currently under house arrest, the term of which has been extended for another year, according to an announcement by the junta in December. Because of rampant civil rights violations, Myanmar is currently the target of economic sanctions by the United States, the European Union and Japan.

The economic effect of the junta on Myanmar is stifling at best. Myanmar is rich with natural resources with deposits of oil, natural gas, uranium, precious and non-precious metals, precious and semi-precious minerals and timber. Very little of these resources are exploited, though, other than natural gas. Most of the natural gas production is exported. Industrial

development is at a very low level. The military junta controls most commerce in Myanmar. This has the effect of suppressing the economy. For example, gem production areas are leased to large foreign corporations. The generals oversee the production and take the best material for themselves in addition to the leasing fees. In this way, the generals control commerce and get rich while controlling the money that makes it into worker's hands. There is no particular incentive for the generals to stimulate the economy since they're getting fat by controlling the existing system.

The generals also control what social issues are discussed and managed. For example, since the official position is that AIDS is a white man's disease, there is no problem with AIDS in Myanmar. Therefore, nothing is done to deal with the huge problem that actually exists. Even though the people are actually very poor, the generals claim that no one is poor. This means that no one should be begging, and beggars are punished.

The effect of the control the generals have over the country is that the people are very poor, and seem to have little ambition or ability to change anything. Myanmar is in what seems to be a medieval state. In Yangon (the local name for Rangoon), the largest city in Myanmar, the junta outlawed motorcycles because they were "noise and dirty". Since the people can not afford cars, the normal mode of transportation is bicycles. Bikes are everywhere. There is a lack of commerce with other countries and a lack of cash in the populace. Because of this, the bikes tend to be 1950s vintage. Public transportation like buses tend to be 1930s vintage. They can be double decker, and if you look, you can tell that the tops are wooden and added to the bus. Taxis are 1970s era Toyota sedans. There are also a lot of WWII era Willys Jeeps around.

All these old vehicles need to be maintained, but there are no parts available and no money for them anyway. Vehicle owners have to be very creative to keep their bikes and cars running. Michael related a story about kids asking him for shampoo. It turned out that shampoo makes a satisfactory replacement for brake fluid.

When the British ruled Burma, they built a transportation infrastructure. These roads are still in use, but have not been maintained since the British left and are in incredibly bad shape. Everyone drives very slowly over these roads to avoid damage to their vehicle.

On entry into the country, you are required to exchange your dollars for kyat, the official currency of Myanmar. The official rate is about six kyat per dollar, but the unofficial street exchange rate is 100 kyat per dollar or more. It is not unusual to see dollars changing hands on the street, since it is a more stable medium than kyat.

Myanmar has almost no tourist trade. Historically, the Burmese have been very aggressive toward their neighbors. As a result, they are shunned by tourists from nearby Asian countries. In addition, visitors, while welcome, must be guided everywhere. Michael and his traveling partner were assigned a government approved guide fluent in English. This guide took them to "safe" places such as Buddhist temples, museums and the like. They couldn't just go anywhere they wanted. It also became apparent to Michael that they and their guide were being watched. Since they had no intention of doing anything improper, this was not a problem. This, in addition to everything else observed, showed that the Burmese people live in a very oppressive environment.

Myanmar is home to many different kinds of gemstones. Beryls, chrysoberyls, rubies, sapphires and Burmese catseye are some of the gem materials present in Myanmar. Almost every class of gemstone except some very rare ones are found there in some quantity. The museums in Yangon (Rangoon) have incredibly rich displays of gemstones and gem minerals. Michael brought some a brochure of one of the museums. We were practically drooling at what we saw.

The king of gem materials in Myanmar, though, is jadeite. Burmese jadeite is of the highest quality. The gem quality carvings made of translucent jadeite are truly spectacular. Jadeite of all colors is found. An enormous jadeite boulder was found which had areas of

many different colors, including a natural blue jadeite, a very rare variety.

Michael brought a book about jadeite that he said is by far the most authoritative book on the subject. This book is called Myanmar Jade by U Myan Thin, a Burmese author. Published by the Mandalay Gem Association, it is no longer in print.

The gem mining areas in Myanmar appear to be quite distinct. For instance, the main jadeite mines are in the northern part of Myanmar near the Himalayas. The ruby mines are further south and to the east. Corundums seem to be found in distinct areas as well, with few if any sapphires found in the ruby areas and vice versa.

When the British conquered Burma in 1824, in large part it was in order to control the Burmese jadeite production. There was, and still is, a huge market for Burmese jadeite carvings in Asia. The British didn't know where the jadeite mines were, so they searched the country until they found it in the north. The jadeite was carved by local artisans and exported to England and Asia, particularly Hong Kong. Some of the particularly prime material was exported to England and worked by craftsmen there. In antique shops in Hong Kong, some of these amazing pieces are still to be found.

The Buddhist temples are amazing places, full of gold and gemstones. The statues of Buddha in the temples are gold covered. When a family gets some extra money, the husband buys a piece of paper with gold leaf layered on it. With the wife standing back, the husband takes the gold leaf and rubs it onto the Buddha statue. Because of this, the gold covering the statues is very thick. The gold leaf is made in factories by hand. A small lump of gold is hammered out by hand into gold leaf. This is grueling work in a very hot environment, so one worker hammers while another rests. A bucket of water stands next to the work station. In the bucket floats a coconut half-shell with a hole in the top. When the coconut shell sinks, they trade places. No clocks, no watches. The Burmese have a very different concept than what we are used to.

In Yangon, there is a trading area called the Scott Street Market. Very eclectic in nature, almost anything can be found there. There is an

